



TERMS TO KNOW:

Before or after watching this episode, encourage students to define and review the terms below. Students may also want to make their own lists of new vocabulary words and identification terms as they watch.

Abolitionism
Aristocracy
Cotton gin
Espionage
Industrialism
Ingenious
Ravine
Rupture
Textile



America The Story of Us is useful for American History, Social Studies, and Media courses. It is appropriate for 7th grade students and above, and is an excellent resource for professional development.

EPISODE 4: DIVISION

INTRODUCTION

America becomes a nation just as a revolution in commerce and industry sweeps across the western world. This vast new country, rich in resources, experiences rapid changes – in trade, transport and manufacturing – and America quickly turns into one of the wealthiest nations on earth.

The Erie Canal creates a vital pathway through the nation in 1825, New York City booms, the factory town of Lowell becomes the cradle of the American industrial revolution and in the South the cotton gin streamlines the process of separating seeds from the fibers and sets off a manufacturing explosion.



Though some are united in prosperity, the United States is divided by culture, and the crisis over whether to allow slavery to spread reaches a breaking point. There are violent clashes in Kansas. John Brown carries out a suicidal mission to try to end slavery in Virginia in 1859. He fails. After the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, war seems inevitable.

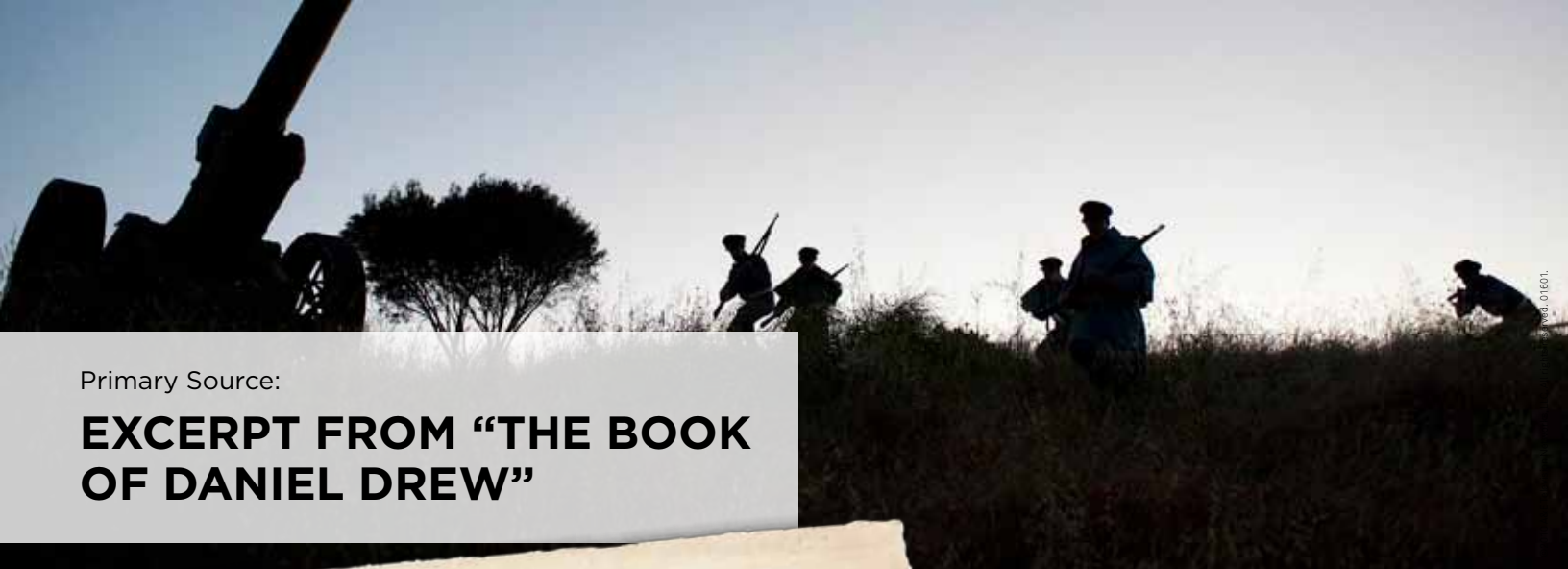


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why did U.S. leaders want to build the Erie Canal? How did the canal change the U.S.?
2. Some historians refer to the increase in highways and roads in the U.S. during the 19th century as a “transportation revolution.” How did the addition of many more roads and highways affect the U.S.?
3. When was the Fugitive Slave Act passed, and what were the consequences of this law?



4. In this episode, a commentator says that the Civil War played a role in advancing U.S. industrial progress. Can you give an example that proves this argument?
5. Define the word “inevitable” – what does this word mean? Do you think the Civil War was inevitable?



Primary Source:

EXCERPT FROM “THE BOOK OF DANIEL DREW”

This is a short excerpt from the autobiography of cattle baron and early Wall Street broker Daniel Drew. Drew describes the reaction in New York state to the onset of the Civil War.

“When the Civil War finally broke out, I wasn’t sure for a spell whether I wanted to see York State go into it or not...It was a hard thing to decide, whether to go in for the War and stand by the Union, or stay out and make ourselves free and independent.

But Abe Lincoln came to New York and made a speech at Cooper Union. That turned people towards the preservation of the Union. It wasn’t much of a stump speech. Lincoln’s voice, I always thought, was too husky to make him a popular talker. But people who came away from Cooper Union that night got the notion that this question of standing by the Union was really of considerable importance....Then when, on top of that speech, the shots were fired on Ft. Sumter, it make such an almighty stir among the people generally that we Wall Street men had to get in step.

A fellow would have been very unpopular then, if he had stood out against the War. It was now a case of fight it out, no matter what the cost.”
(New York; Doubleday, 1910).

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

What else was going on during this time period? Explore the sites below to learn more about the era of U.S. history covered in this episode.

Learn more about the significance of the Indian Removal Act
www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html

Read about the Missouri Compromise
www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Missouri.html

Andrew Jackson’s “Bank War”
www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2008-01/KingAndrewandtheBank.html

Florida’s Black Seminoles and the slave issue in Florida
www.yale.edu/glc/gullah/07.htm

PLACES TO VISIT:

Interested in what you saw in this episode? Visiting historic sites is a great way for teachers, students, and families to learn more about the past. Explore these historic sites, or look for local historic sites in your town or city to visit.

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
www.neh.gov/news/humanities/2008-01/KingAndrewandtheBank.html

The New Bedford Whaling Museum
www.whalingmuseum.org

Lowell, Mass. National Historical Park
www.nps.gov/lowe/index.htm

National Underground Railroad Freedom Center
www.freedomcenter.org

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Drew was reluctant at first to see New York support the Civil War?
2. Based on Drew’s statements, why do you think New Yorkers decided to support the Civil War effort?